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# INDIANA QUARTERLY MAGAZINE OF HISTORY

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CHRISTOPHER B. COLEMAN, *Editor*

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## EDITORIAL.

### ILLINOIS HISTORICAL SOCIETIES.

The Illinois Historical Collections, Volume III, constituting the first volume of the Lincoln Series, gives a good occasion for a description of some of the historical work now being done in our neighboring State. This volume, edited by Dr. E. E. Sparks, now president of Pennsylvania State College, sometime professor of American history in the University of Chicago, is one of the most timely and most generally useful publications ever published by an historical organization in the middle west. It contains the full text of the Lincoln-Douglas debates of 1858, carefully edited, and in addition copious illustrative material and newspaper comments taken from the most important papers of the time. The series to which it belongs is being published by the trustees of the State Historical Library by means of an appropriation from the State.

It is only about nine years since work of this sort was begun in a serious way in Illinois. At that time the publications of the State Historical Library began, and from the same time dates the organization of the State Historical Society. The first volume of the Illinois Historical Collections, the title under which the larger and more important publications are issued, was gotten out in 1903. In addition to this series the State Historical Library now publishes an annual volume of Transactions of the Illinois State Historical Society, periodical Bulletins of the Historical Library, and Journals of the Historical Society.

In Illinois a somewhat peculiar dual organization exists. The State Historical Library (which, it should be said, is entirely separate and distinct from the State Library), is a creature of the State, furnished with quarters in the capitol, maintained

entirely by appropriations from the State Legislature, and controlled by a State board of trustees. It gets out all the publications of the State Historical Society. The latter is a purely voluntary organization with a membership of about seven hundred, the fee being one dollar, officered by a president, three vice-presidents, a secretary-treasurer, and fifteen directors, all elected by the members at the annual meeting. As the government of Illinois gives no State aid to private organizations of this sort, there is no organic union between the Society and the Library. But the librarian, or secretary-treasurer of the Library, Mrs. Jessie Palmer Weber, is also the secretary-treasurer of the Society, and the Library uses a considerable part of its funds in the publications of the Society, issued in the name of the Library.

One of the most interesting features of the historical movement in Illinois is the growth of local societies. One of these, the Chicago Historical Society, of which the late Edward G. Mason was a well-known member, is a substantial and permanent organization of long standing, having a good library building and invested funds of more than three hundred thousand dollars. The German-American Historical Society, also of Chicago, is another active organization, publishing a quarterly devoted to the work the above name indicates. A strong effort is now being made by the State organization to advance the development of county societies. This has been so far successful that in 1907 there were in Illinois twenty county historical societies and four other organizations doing the work of county historical societies. Some of these are active and well established, others are intermittent in their efforts and their meetings, and some are probably moribund. A slight official connection between them and the State Historical Society is maintained in the provision that the presidents of local historical societies shall be honorary vice-presidents of that organization. We in Indiana should follow with interest this attempt to extend and popularize the study of local history and the preservation of historical material.